

Letter from Mabel Hubbard Bell to Alexander Graham Bell, April 20, 1891, with transcript

Letter from Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell to Dr. Alexander Graham Bell. M.G.B. 1336
Nineteenth Street, April 21st 20 , 1891. My dear Alec:

No word from you today, I wish there were. I think your lambs could spare you long enough to indite a telegram at least.

I don't know whether this has been a profitable or unprofitable day. What does it profit a lady to decide that the evil effects of the tendency of the age toward specialization of labor should be counteracted by giving every child however humble a practical technical education and that is — as (Mr. McCurdy says “To make men of men and not machines”) In the first place I doubt that it would have the effect intended where it is most needed, viz. Among the humble finishers of pins etc., for the reason that they could afford to study for such a shortperiodof their lives that what they learn will last with them but a short time.

Well I am not quite so certain of the soundness of this reasoning come to write it down, perhaps it would hold good with the vast majority of the workers, but this technical education might be the means of developing many minds with talents which otherwise would remain forever dormant. Do you wonder where I come by all these thoughts, so foreign to my usual ideas? or have you guessed that I have attended another session of the Cobweb Club. Mrs. Sweat herself gave the paper, and I have given you the text of it. I believe the discussion was brought to a close by one lady confessing that she had forgotten her multiplication table and that while she carefully noted what she spent she never balanced her books? 2 Another thought the best way was to pay by cheque, only you might overdraw your account. Then there was a glowing accounts of the wonderful memory of some men who added up four long columns of figures at a glance, and then

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Aileen presented an account of Mrs. Hughes' sound pictures. I wanted to speak of the soap bubble figures, but did not get a chance.

I am invited to go again next Monday when it is hoped we may have a full meeting, the grip having depleted the ranks of the members' attendance lately — (see the Century dictionary for the meaning of the word deplete — Mr. McCurdy.) I hope you appreciate this letter. I won't attempt anything so high flown again, my flights of rhetoric have been short and ignominious requiring Mr. McCurdy's assistance to pull me out of pools of — another pool! You may do the pulling yourself this time.

I found Aileen had by no means done with me when we left Mrs. Sweat's rooms after a good solid two hours work, she wanted me to attend another club after lunch, showed me a letter asking her to bring me, especially if I were the lady interested in Cape Breton work. So we went around — to find another empty meeting — grip again. This was the Worlds Fair Club of Washington, and I am a member, and spouted to my own great edification if to nobody elses on the work, in C.B. Ireland and Sandringham. Then I am also to be a member of the Washington Club. The privileges so far as I can discover are, to pay at least \$15.00 a year annual fee, and \$1.00 a month dues, and privately object to any new members. After this Miss True, Ninie and I drove out to Cabin John Bridge, and Day and Mr. McCurdy accompanied us as far as Glen Echo. They are laying 3 out villa sites all the way to the falls and changing the whole appearance of the country.

Now it is time for Elsie's letter, I think I am very badly treated by both husband and daughter, but I forgive you.

Lovingly ever, Mabel.